

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 361

August 4, 1995, 2:33 p.m.
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DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION/Elimination of the Defense Firewalls

SUBJECT: National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1996 . . . S. 1026. Bumpers motion to waive the Budget Act for the consideration of the Bumpers amendment No. 2115.

ACTION: MOTION REJECTED, 37-63

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 1026, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1996, will authorize \$264.7 billion in total budget authority for the Department of Defense, national security programs of the Department of Energy, civil defense, and military construction accounts. This amount is \$7 billion more than requested (\$5.3 billion more for procurement and \$1.7 billion more for research and development), and is \$2.6 billion less than the amount approved in the House-passed bill.

The Bumpers amendment would remove the separate budget authority and outlay caps (firewalls) for defense spending and other spending (those separate caps, enforceable by 60-vote points of order, exist for fiscal years 1996-1998).

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. Following debate, Senator Domenici raised the point of order that the Bumpers amendment violated section 306 of the Budget Act. Senator Bumpers then moved to waive the Budget Act. Generally, those favoring the motion to waive favored the amendment; those opposing the motion to waive opposed the amendment.

NOTE: The motion to waive requires a three-fifths majority (60) vote of the Senate to succeed.

Those favoring the motion to waive contended:

We begin this debate by conceding we will lose. It will take many years of misery before the American people wake up to the misguided, obscene priorities that are being pursued by this Congress. The strength of a Nation is not measured in guns, bombs, and tanks, but in how it treats its people. This Congress loves its guns and bombs but it is treating the people of America miserably. It opposes paying for abortions for poor women; it wants to cut welfare; it is determined to slash Medicare and Medicaid; it is out to privatize public broadcasting; it is against affirmative action; and with its attack on Food Stamps it does not even want to feed the hungry. While miserably contemplating how the new Republican majority is abandoning the weak and the meek, proposing tax cuts

(See other side)

YEAS (37)			NAYS (63)			NOT VOTING (0)	
Republicans (3 or 6%)	Democrats (34 or 74%)		Republicans (51 or 94%)	Democrats (12 or 26%)		Republicans (0)	Democrats (0)
Hatfield	Akaka	Kennedy	Abraham	Helms	Bryan		
Jeffords	Baucus	Kerry	Ashcroft	Hutchison	Exon		
Specter	Biden	Kohl	Bennett	Inhofe	Feinstein		
	Bingaman	Lautenberg	Bond	Kassebaum	Ford		
	Boxer	Leahy	Brown	Kempthorne	Glenn		
	Bradley	Levin	Burns	Kyl	Graham		
	Breaux	Mikulski	Campbell	Lott	Heflin		
	Bumpers	Moseley-Braun	Chafee	Lugar	Inouye		
	Byrd	Moynihan	Coats	Mack	Kerrey		
	Conrad	Murray	Cochran	McCain	Lieberman		
	Daschle	Pell	Cohen	McConnell	Nunn		
	Dodd	Pryor	Coverdell	Murkowski	Robb		
	Dorgan	Reid	Craig	Nickles			
	Feingold	Rockefeller	D'Amato	Packwood			
	Harkin	Sarbanes	DeWine	Pressler			
	Hollings	Simon	Dole	Roth			
	Johnston	Wellstone	Domenici	Santorum			
			Faircloth	Shelby			
			Frist	Simpson			
			Gorton	Smith			
			Gramm	Snowe			
			Grams	Stevens			
			Grassley	Thomas			
			Gregg	Thompson			
			Hatch	Thurmond			
				Warner			

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

for the wealthy, and arming to the teeth against nonexistent enemies, it occurred to us that pointing out that defense only has a firewall would be a unique way of crystallizing this debate for the American people.

Our colleagues are planning on reducing spending by nearly \$1 trillion over the next 7 years. A tiny fraction of that amount will come from defense. However, the United States by itself spends more than twice as much on defense as its 9 major potential enemies spend put together. We are maintaining a Cold War budget even though we are the only superpower in the world. It is tragic lunacy to starve our people at home in order to build ridiculously strong defenses to fight off nonexistent enemies. However, we have a firewall to protect that defense spending. A Senator is not allowed to suggest taking \$1 billion out of a \$264 billion defense budget to spend on immunizations for children, for example. No similar protection is given to any other spending. Medicare does not have a firewall; Medicaid does not have a firewall; Food Stamps do not have a firewall. In our estimation, neither should defense. We therefore urge, however futilely, that Senators support the motion to waive the Budget Act for the consideration of the Bumpers amendment.

Those opposing the motion to waive contended:

Our colleagues are very passionate in what they believe. Sincerity does not make them right. They talk about Medicare cuts, but Medicare spending will go up, not down, by \$349 billion over the next 7 years. It will only not increase quite as fast as they like. It is not enough for them to have the program grow at 2 times the rate of inflation; they want it to grow at 3 times that rate. They talk about Medicaid cuts, but Medicaid spending will go up, not down, by \$149 billion. It will only not increase quite as fast as they like. As for domestic discretionary spending, in 1990 such spending was \$202 billion, and in 1995 it will be \$274 billion. In 5 years it has climbed 36 percent in nominal terms. Defense spending dropped \$30 billion in the same timeframe. Further, under this budget it will go down another \$13 billion from a hard, nominal freeze. In real terms, we are talking about cutting nearly 10 percent more out of the defense budget. By the time we are done in 2002, we will be spending only half as much on defense as we spent in 1985.

Our colleagues like to point out that the United States spends a lot more on defense than does its opponents. They never mention that the reason why is that we have an All-Volunteer force. If the United States had the draft, like nearly every country in the world, it could pay its soldiers \$1 or \$2 a day too. However, American volunteers are paid fairly for serving their country as a career. If our colleagues favor conscription we would like to hear them admit it. If not, they should quit making spurious comparisons between the costs of United States defenses and the costs of the defenses of its adversaries.

We placed a firewall between defense spending and domestic spending because without it the temptation is very strong to cut "just a little bit" out of the large defense budget to take care of a pet social program. Over the years, these little cuts take their toll on the ability of this country to defend itself. In all honesty, we think that the situation has now reversed, at least in the House; the House just voted to cut more out of domestic discretionary spending, and it wants to add more money to defense. Senator Bumpers quite openly would like to tear down the defense firewalls with the intention of then cutting defense spending and increasing welfare spending. However, he may find the money flowing the other way if the firewalls are removed.

Either way, we favor firewalls. Defense spending should be viewed in isolation from other spending. The appropriate way to determine defense spending is to analyze defense needs, develop a plan on how to meet those needs, and then allocate funds. Once a plan is developed it should not be chipped away based on domestic needs, nor should it be padded. We need a holistic, not an incremental, approach to defense. When we look at defense spending, the choice is not between funding for a B-2 or funding for Head Start; it is a choice between having a military capable of offensive operations sufficient to keep the peace, or having a weak military that encourages aggression.

Much as our colleagues may resent the fact, they cannot repeal the laws of history and human nature. Technology progresses but human nature remains the same, as is attested to by the 50 conflicts that are currently raging in the world. The proper lesson to draw is that the danger is greater because people are better than ever at killing each other. However, we also understand, based on experience, why our colleagues do not draw this lesson. Historically, the United States and other democracies disarm after a conflict. Historically, they assume that their peaceful intentions are shared by other nations. Historically, they tend "to reinterpret" their international commitments, deciding that the threat really is not that great, which has the salutary (for them) effect of freeing up resources to spend on clamorous domestic special interest groups. These inherent tendencies in democracies, coupled with less benevolent inherent tendencies in other countries, invariably produce new conflicts. Those tendencies are that aggressive nations will constantly probe for weaknesses. If they believe another nation is unwilling to fight back, or will be slow in fighting back, it will attack. The ability to respond swiftly deters aggression. Not having that ability leads to long and bloody conflicts. When these conflicts erupt, democracies have generally been caught by surprise. They do not have long preparation times. Even during the Cold War, when the United States and its allies prepared carefully to deter aggression, they thought they would have 3 days to 3 months notice before the Warsaw Pact and Russia attacked. After the end of the Cold War, it turned out that the Warsaw Pact was ready to attack with 3-hours notice.

We do not think that the United States spends too much on defense. History tells us that future wars are not only likely, they are unavoidable. In our estimation, we already have dangerously low funding. We do not want to repeat our country's typical mistake of disarming so that we may have more to spend domestically. The firewalls between defense and domestic discretionary spending

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are appropriate, and we therefore oppose this amendment's attempt to remove them.